

MYSTIC APPARITIONS.

The Weird and Puzzling Enigma of Ghostly Visions.

MESSAGES FROM THE DEAD.

The "Ghost" That Appears to Warn a Living Person of Impending Misfortune—The Strange Case of a Boston Man and His Deceased Sister.

In the "Riddle of Personality" the author, H. Addington Bruce, discussing the proposition that human personality persists beyond the grave, cites a number of instances of apparitions that were closely investigated by the Society For Psychological Research and says:

In order to appreciate the nature of the evidence accumulated, let us glance at a few typical instances, each drawn from the society's records and thus sufficiently authenticated to merit serious consideration. We may begin with an old fashioned "ghost" story of the simpler sort. In this instance the percipient, a Mr. J., was a personal acquaintance of F. W. H. Myers, who obtained a first hand account of the experience. In 1880 it appears Mr. Q., the librarian of X. library, died, and Mr. J. was appointed his successor. Mr. J. had not known Mr. Q., nor had he to his knowledge seen any portrait of him when in 1884, or four years after his death, he made the old librarian's acquaintance under these circumstances:

"I was sitting alone in the library one evening late in March, 1884, finishing some work after hours, when it suddenly occurred to me that I should miss the last train to H., where I was then living, if I did not make haste. I gathered up some books in one hand, took the lamp in the other and prepared to leave the librarian's room, which, communicated by a passage with the main room of the library. As my lamp illumined the passage I saw apparently at the end of it a man's face. I instantly thought a thief had got into the library. I turned back into my room, put down the books and took a revolver from the safe, and, holding the lamp cautiously behind me, I made my way along the passage into the main room. Here I saw no one, but the room was large and lumbered with bookcases.

"I called out loudly to the intruder to show himself several times more with the hope of attracting a passing policeman than of drawing the intruder. Then I saw a face looking round one of the bookcases. I say round, but it had an odd appearance, as if the body were in the bookcase, as the face came so closely to the edge and I could see no body. The face was pallid and hairless, and the orbits of the eyes were very deep. I advanced toward it, and as I did so I saw an old man with high shoulders seem to rotate out of the end of the bookcase and with his back toward me and with a shuffling gait walk rather quickly from the bookcase to the door of a small lavatory which opened from the library and had no other access. I heard no noise. I followed the man at once into the lavatory and to my extreme surprise found no one there. Completely mystified, I even looked into the little cupboard under the fixed basin. There was nowhere hiding for a child, and I confess I began to experience for the first time what novelists describe as an 'eerie' feeling. I left the library and found I had missed my train.

"Next morning I mentioned what I had seen to a local clergyman, who on hearing my description said, 'Why, that's old Q.' Soon after I saw a photograph (from a drawing of Q., and the resemblance was certainly striking. Q. had lost all his hair, eyebrows and all from, I believe, a gunpowder accident. His walk was a peculiar rapid, high shouldered shuffle. Later inquiry proved he had died at about the time of year at which I saw the figure."

This is a capital illustration of the revent type of apparition, the "ghost" that visits a locality with which it was familiar in life.

Then there is the "ghost" that appears to warn a living person of impending misfortune. Take the strange case of Mr. F. G. of Boston, who writes:

"In 1867 my only sister, a young lady of eighteen years, died suddenly of cholera in St. Louis. My attachment for her was very strong and the blow a severe one to me. A year or so after her death the writer became a commercial traveler, and it was in 1876, while on one of my western trips, that the event occurred.

"I had 'drummed' the city of St. Joseph, Mo., and had gone to my room at the Pacific House to send in my orders, which were unusually large ones, so that I was in a very happy frame of mind indeed. The hour was high noon, and the sun was shining cheerfully into my room. While busily smoking a cigar and writing out my orders I suddenly became conscious that some one was sitting on my left, with one arm resting on the table. Quick as a flash I turned and distinctly saw the form of my dead sister and for a brief second or so looked her squarely in the face, and so sure was I that it was she that I sprang forward in delight, calling her by name, and as I did so the apparition instantly vanished. Naturally I was startled and dumfounded, almost doubting my senses; but, the cigar in my mouth and pen in hand, with the ink still moist on my letter, I

satisfied myself I had not been dreaming and was wide awake.

"Now comes the most remarkable confirmation of my statement, which

cannot be doubted by those who know what I state actually occurred. This visitation or whatever you may call it so impressed me that I took the next train home, and in the presence of my parents and others I related what had occurred. My father, a man of rare good sense and very practical, was inclined to ridicule me, as he saw how earnestly I believed what I stated. But he, too, was amazed when later on I told them of a bright red line or scratch on the right hand side of my sister's face which I distinctly had seen. When I mentioned this, my mother rose, trembling, to her feet and nearly fainted away, and as soon as she sufficiently recovered her self possession, with tears streaming down her face, she exclaimed that I had indeed seen my sister, as no living mortal but herself was aware of that scratch, which she had accidentally made while doing some little act of kindness after my sister's death. She said she well remembered how pained she was to think she should have unintentionally marred the features of her dead daughter and that unknown to all how she had carefully obliterated all traces of the slight scratch with the aid of powder, etc., and that she had never mentioned it to a human being from that day to this. In proof neither my father nor any of our family had detected it and positively were unaware of the incident, yet I saw the scratch as bright as if just made."

Whatever the explanation of the apparition, it was the means of bringing the son home to take a long, last farewell of his mother, for she died within a fortnight of his return, "happy in her belief she would rejoin her favorite daughter in another world."

And now to turn to psychical phenomena of another type, the auditory hallucinations by which knowledge seems to be conveyed of deaths occurring far outside the normal ken of the percipient. The experience of a Mr. Wamby is typical. Once when planning a congratulatory letter to a friend the words: "What! Write to a dead man? Write to a dead man?" rang in his ears, and he later found that his friend had been dead for some days. Far more bizarre was an incident related to Mr. Myers by a Mrs. Davies. An acquaintance of hers had changed her abode unexpectedly, and it was arranged that Mrs. Davies should receive her mail until she could communicate her new address to her friends and particularly to her husband, who was in India. One evening a letter arrived bearing the India postmark, and Mrs. Davies placed it on the chimney piece, intending to ask her brother to hand it next day to the addressee. Suddenly she became aware of a strange ticking sound that seemed to proceed from the letter itself. Her brother, too, heard it, and, yielding to superstition, they imagined that the sound meant: "Important! To be delivered at once!" The brother thereupon put on his hat and carried the letter to their friend, who found it to be a communication from an unknown correspondent, some servant or companion, notifying her of her husband's death.

Taken singly, such incidents as the above are not without impressiveness. Considered in the aggregate and as massed by the thousand with corroborative data carefully preserved in the society's archives, they may well give one pause.

Custer and Ramseur.

In General Morris Schaff's reminiscences, "The Spirit of Old West Point," there is an incident that goes to show that not even the first bitterness of the struggle between the north and the south could put out altogether the fires of friendship. It was the fate of Stephen D. Ramseur of North Carolina to fall in the Confederate service. His last hours had a close connection with West Point, where he had been enrolled as a cadet. When in the darkness after the battle of Cedar Creek the Union cavalry charged the broken and fleeing remnants of a division of Early's corps, Custer, who was in the midst, heard one of his troopers who had seized the horses ask the driver whom he had in his ambulance.

"Do not tell him," commanded a weak, husky voice.

Whereupon Custer, who recognized the voice as one he had so often heard at West Point, exclaimed:

"Is that you, Ramseur?"

Custer had him taken to Sheridan's headquarters, where his old friends, Merritt, Custer and the gallant Pennington, gathered around him and showed him every tenderness to the last. He died about 10 o'clock the next day.

Bunsen's Pocketful of Orders.

Professor Bunsen thought more highly of his scientific discoveries than he did of the many orders and other tokens of honor that were showered on him during his long life. He was apt to forget to put on his crosses and ribbons when invited to official ceremonies, and his housekeeper tried to remind him of his duty by putting his various orders in the pocket of his dress suit trousers. On one occasion he was invited with the other Heidelberg professors to dine with a Baden prince. He entered the room late, after the guests had assembled, and one of his colleagues turned to him and said:

"Excuse me, Herr Gehelmrath, but what have you done with your orders?" Bunsen was taken aback. He thought

for a moment, and then plunging his hand into his pocket, he pulled out a fist full of stars and crosses. As soon as they recovered from their astonishment every one began to laugh, but Bunsen said good naturedly, "Oh, I have a lot more," and pulled another handful out of the right hand pocket of his trousers.

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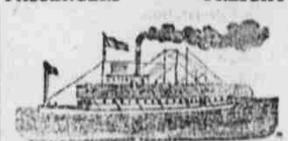


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